

Appln No. 09/938,117
Amdt date July 12, 2007
Reply to Office action of January 25, 2007

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A postage indicium fraud detection method for permitting the automated processing of void mail pieces for which accounting has not been affected bearing a designated indicium, comprising:

providing client software having a graphical user interface with a print postage screen into which is entered a delivery address, and an option to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, the client software further including a feature to verify the validity of the delivery address, the client software further providing the user with the opportunity to select an envelope size and customize an envelope size onto which will be printed the first designated indicium;

wherein for cases where accounting for postage on a mail piece has not been affected, such as when a user has selected to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, printing a first designated indicium on the mail piece or a sample label to be applied to the mail piece, the first designated indicium comprising at least one of a designated facing identification marking (FIM) having a plurality of vertical bars arranged differently from FIM A, FIM B, and FIM C markings, and a designated postal numeric encoding technique (POSTNET) barcode that comprises a plurality of vertical bars, which designated POSTNET barcode does not correspond to an actual zip code, which first designated indicium identifies the mail piece as being a void mail piece;

providing automated mail handling equipment that reads FIM markings and POSTNET barcodes, and storing data concerning the designated facing identification marking and the designated POSTNET barcode; and

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using the automated mail handling equipment to read the first designated indicium on the mail piece and compare it to the stored data and sort the void mail piece bearing the first designated ~~indicia~~ indicium from mail pieces not bearing the first designated ~~indicia~~ indicium.

2 - 3 (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The postage indicium fraud detection method of claim 1, wherein an additional indicium comprising a designated postal ~~alpha-numeric~~ alphanumeric encoding technology barcode is printed onto the mail piece or label for the mail piece, which designated postal ~~alpha-numeric~~ alphanumeric encoding technology barcode is used to at least one of identify a sender of the void mail piece, identify a time of the void mail handling, and collect statistics on attempts to mail void mail pieces by the sender.

5. (Currently amended) A postage indicium fraud detection method for permitting the automated processing of void mail pieces for which accounting has not been affected bearing a first designated indicium using existing automated mail handling equipment, comprising:

providing client software having a graphical user interface with a print postage screen into which is entered a delivery address, and an option to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, the client software further including a feature to verify the validity of the delivery address, the client software further providing the user with the opportunity to select an envelope size and customize an envelope size onto which will be printed the first designated indicium;

wherein for cases where accounting for postage on a mail piece has not been affected, such as when a user has selected to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, printing ~~[[a]]~~ the first designated indicium on the mail piece or a label to be applied to the mail piece, the first designated indicium comprising at least one of a designated facing identification marking (FIM) having a plurality of vertical bars arranged differently from a valid FIM marking comprising FIM A, FIM B, and FIM C markings, and a designated postal numeric

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encoding technique (POSTNET) barcode that comprises a plurality of vertical bars, which designated POSTNET barcode is different from a valid POSTNET barcode that corresponds to an actual zip code, which first designated indicium identifies the mail piece as being a void mail piece which is to be sorted from mail pieces not bearing the designated indicium;

providing automated mail handling equipment that reads FIM marking and POSTNET barcodes, and storing data that identifies the valid FIM marking and the valid POSTNET barcodes; and

processing the void mail piece bearing the first designated indicium with the automated mail handling equipment by using the automated mail handling equipment to read the FIM marking or POSTNET barcode and compare it to the stored data and if the read FIM marking or POSTNET barcode are not valid, identifying such mail piece as being a void mail piece, and segregating the void mail piece from other non-void mail pieces.

6 - 7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) The postage indicium fraud detection method of claim 5, further comprising printing a second designated indicia, comprising a postal ~~alpha-numeric~~ alphanumeric encoding technology barcode which is used by automated mail handling equipment to identify a sender of the void mail piece, identify a time of the void mail handling, and collect statistics on attempts to mail void mail pieces by the sender.

9. (Currently amended) A postage indicium fraud detection method for permitting the automated processing and segregation of void mail pieces bearing a first designated indicium from non-void mail pieces not bearing the first designated indicium for which accounting has not been affected, comprising:

providing client software having a graphical user interface with a print postage screen into which is entered a delivery address, and an option to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, the client software further providing the user with the

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opportunity to select a envelope size and customize an envelope size onto which will be printed the first designated indicium;

authorizing the client software for a user to print ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia ~~postage~~ onto a mail piece or a label for a mail piece;

entering a valid delivery address into the client software, and selecting at least one of a type of mail piece, mail class, attributes, and special services by the user;

having the user verify and accept ~~verifying and accepting~~ the delivery address and any modifications thereto;

having the client software verify the correctness of the delivery address and make any necessary corrections thereto;

selecting between printing a sample void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia ~~postage~~ and a non-void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia;

printing a sample void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia for void mail pieces and printing non-void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia for non-void mail pieces, wherein the void mail piece or the label therefore is printed with ~~[[a]]~~ the first designated indicium comprising at least one of a designated facing identification marking (FIM) having a plurality of vertical bars arranged differently from FIM A, FIM B, and FIM C markings, and a designated postal numeric encoding technique (POSTNET) barcode that comprises a plurality of vertical bars, which designated POSTNET barcode does not correspond to an actual zip code, which first designated indicium identifies the mail piece as a void mail piece; and

providing automated mail handling equipment, and storing data that identifies the designated FIM marking and the designated POSTNET barcode as corresponding to a void mail piece, which automated mail handling equipment is adapted to identify the first designated indicium on the mail piece and compare it to the stored data and segregate the void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia bearing mail pieces from non-void ~~information-based~~ information-based postage indicia bearing mail pieces.

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wherein the client software further provides the user with the opportunity to select a envelope size and customize an envelope size onto which will be printed the first designated indicium.

10. (Currently amended) The postage indicium fraud detection method of claim 9, further comprising printing a postal ~~alpha-numeric~~ alpha-numeric encoding technology barcode onto the mail piece or label therefor which is used by automated mail handling equipment to at least one of identify a sender of the void mail piece, a time of the void mail handling, and collect statistics on attempts to mail void mail pieces by the sender.

11. (Currently amended) A postage indicium fraud detection method for permitting the automated processing, identification, and segregation of void mail pieces for which accounting has not been affected bearing a first designated indicium, comprising:

providing client software having a user with a graphical user interface with a print postage screen into which is entered a delivery address, and an option to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, the client software further including a feature to verify the validity of the delivery address, the client software further providing the user with the opportunity to select a envelope size and customize an envelope size onto which will be printed the first designated indicium;

sorting mail based on indicia placed on mail pieces using automated mail handling equipment;

wherein for cases where accounting for postage on a mail piece has not been affected, such as when a user has selected to print a sample mail piece or a sample label to be applied to a mail piece, using the client software to print [[a]] the first designated indicium on a mail piece or a label to be applied to a mail piece, the first designated indicium comprising at least one of a unique facing identification marking (FIM) having a plurality of vertical bars arranged differently from FIM A, FIM B, and FIM C markings, and a designated postal numeric encoding technique (POSTNET) barcode that comprises a plurality of vertical bars, which designated POSTNET barcode does not correspond to an actual zip code; and

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comparing the first designated indicium on the mail piece with ~~[[the]]~~ stored data and using the automated mail handling equipment to segregate mail pieces bearing the first designated indicium from mail pieces not bearing the designated indicium.

12. (Currently amended) The postage indicium fraud detection method of claim 11, wherein the client software is adapted to generate a postal ~~alpha-numeric~~ alpha-numeric encoding technology barcode, which when printed on a mail piece or label therefor is used by automated mail handling equipment to at least one of identify a sender of the void mail piece, identify a time of ~~[[the]]~~ void mail handling, and collect statistics on attempts to mail void mail pieces by the sender.